

ORIGIN/ACTION
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AIRGRAM

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POL 23 GUAT

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PM	2	0/FSF
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5	ARMY	CIA
3	16	5
OSD	USIA	NSA
34	6	3
NSC	6	

A-277
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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

DEPT PASS: GUATEMALA (29)E 1-000, MR

REVIEWED BY *Erf* DATE *11 15 AM 1969*
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

FROM : AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

DATE: 13 Nov 69

SUBJECT : INTERNAL SECURITY: Monthly Report of Incidents,
October 1969

REF :

SUMMARY

1. The level of violence of possible political origin rose materially during October, both in number and seriousness. The sharpest rise occurred in Guatemala's Northeastern area where a number of shootouts and shootings took place. We believe that many of these acts of violence stem from vendettas rooted in political differences exacerbated during the COIN operations. There also seems to be some increase in vigilante-type activity in the area.

Subversives were apparently responsible for several killings and, of course, for the Monoil raid (see A-273 for details).

2. A new chief of the Judicial Police replaced [redacted] NUIILA Hub on October 10. In possibly related events, PK leaders pledged to disband their toughs, the Centurions, and the "military institution" announced its fealty to a constitutional transfer of power, thus relaxing what might have become a prime source of instability.

3. Monoil Raid - Little new information has emerged from continued military patrols near the sites of the Monoil drilling camps attacked October 4 by up to 30 bedraggled men describing themselves as FAR guerrillas (see A-273 of October 20). The interrogation of the prisoner captured by the GOG on October 1 has not produced much data. The DATT received one report, not confirmed by security forces, that an encounter between "unidentified men" and a patrol had occurred on October 13 or 14.

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☐ In ☐ Out

Drafted by: POL:DIQ/are:ma:11/3/69

Contents and Classification Approved by:

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in an unspecified part of the region. On October 23 the press reported that an unidentified body had been located near the campsites, but security forces contend that there is no connection with the guerrillas. Meanwhile, the force level has been raised to fifty troopers and two patrols. The Army pursues its goal of starving the guerrillas out--a difficult task pitting two 10-man patrols against thirty guerrillas thought to be hiding in several hundred square miles of jungle.

4. Salvadoran Terrorist Case - The Guatemalan press devoted extensive space to erroneous first reports from San Salvador that security forces had trapped Julio Ruben LANDA Castaneda causing him to commit suicide rather than face capture. The terrorist later proved to be a still unidentified Salvadoran with false identity papers. Landa's name is well-known to Guatemalans since he was publicly described as one of Ambassador John Gordon Mein's assassins.

5. New Chief for the Judiciales - On October 10, Mario BARRIOS Pena replaced Capt. Pablo NUILA Hub as Chief of the Judicial Police. Little is known of Barrios who has said that his appointment was not due to PR pressures since he does not belong to the Party. He claims he debated taking the job for eight days after the President offered it to him and finally accepted because he wanted to please "my friend, classmate and neighbor." Barrios has two other prominent brothers, both Rightists: Ing. Ricardo and Roberto. Ricardo served as CASTILLO Armas' Minister of Communications; and Roberto is a perennially unsuccessful presidential candidate. All are grandsons of Guatemala's strongman chief of State from 1873-1935, Gen. Rufino Barrios, but the family is split politically and Mario represents the Barrios' Left-wing. A PAR politician, Mario was briefly imprisoned by Castillo and expelled to Honduras on June 25, 1956. He claims to have worked for six years there in the Roads Ministry.

Returned to Guatemala shortly after the fall of Castillo in 1963. Mario Barrios is an experienced administrator and personnel man; he has served some 27 years on road building projects and last worked for Nello Teer, a large construction firm.

6. During a press conference upon taking office, Barrios stressed that "from now on arrests and detentions will not be denied." When asked about his attitude toward subversives, he stated: "We will fight to maintain institutionality. There will be attacks, but I do not think they will prosper. The situation in the coming days will be difficult, but we will move forward." He then changed the subject to the registration of prostitutes.

7. Barrios' appointment raised eyebrows in some Rightist circles who consider him a Leftist and attribute his appointment solely

*Answer to complaint that bottleneck in criminal proceeding prevents arrest and detentions: ... CONFIDENTIAL ... of known criminals.

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to his friendship with the President. Barrios has made a good initial impression upon Mission officers dealing with public safety. They view him as an articulate man with administrative experience.

[REDACTED]

8. Centurions Disbanded - Over a year ago, governing Revolutionary Party (PR) leaders, among them Secretary for Organization Rafael PANTOJA Herrera, encouraged the creation of a band of young toughs drawn from the Party's youth-wing. They were named Centurions and were provided with a blouse and scarf identifying them as members of an "elite" shock force to be used to protect PR politicians and backers as well as to go into the streets to block or contest unscheduled power transfer. The group first achieved notoriety during the 1969 elections in Barbarena where MLN politicians accused the PR of arming the youths to intimidate Rightist candidates and voters. Other reports indicated that one band drove about the Northeast offering protection to PR backers. Although the PR denied the MLN charges (and observed that it was a sooty kettle calling a pot black), the existence of the shock force was always repulsive to President Mendez, who reportedly strongly suggested that it be disbanded. In fact, the Centurions continued to exist, albeit much less obtrusively.

9. On September 28 a group of cadets from the Adolfo V. Mall military academy fell into a brawl with a band of boys, not an unusual occurrence since baiting of the cadets and getting into a good fight are time-honored local traditions. This time, however, one of the cadets eventually died of the beating, and one of the assailants was rumored to be the son of Rafael Pantoja, who has been an activist in the Centurions. The entire incident was hushed up in the press, but the rumor spread quickly through the upper classes and the military. The incident reportedly infuriated both President Mendez and PR candidate Mario FUENTES Pieruccini who insisted that the unit be permanently and publicly disbanded. Accordingly, on October 24, PR Secretary General Alberto MENDEZ and Pantoja announced to the press that the Centurions had been disbanded. They denied that the PR needed a shock force since it had always placed complete faith in the military to maintain law and constitutional order.

10. Days later, in a highly unusual move, the media were given advance copies of a forthcoming editorial to appear in REVISTA MILITAR in which the military pledges to remain apolitical and oppose any attempts to change government through force. At a minimum the result should be the elimination of a highly volatile sore point between the military and the PR, and a reduction of the tensions in the political sphere that such frictions engender.

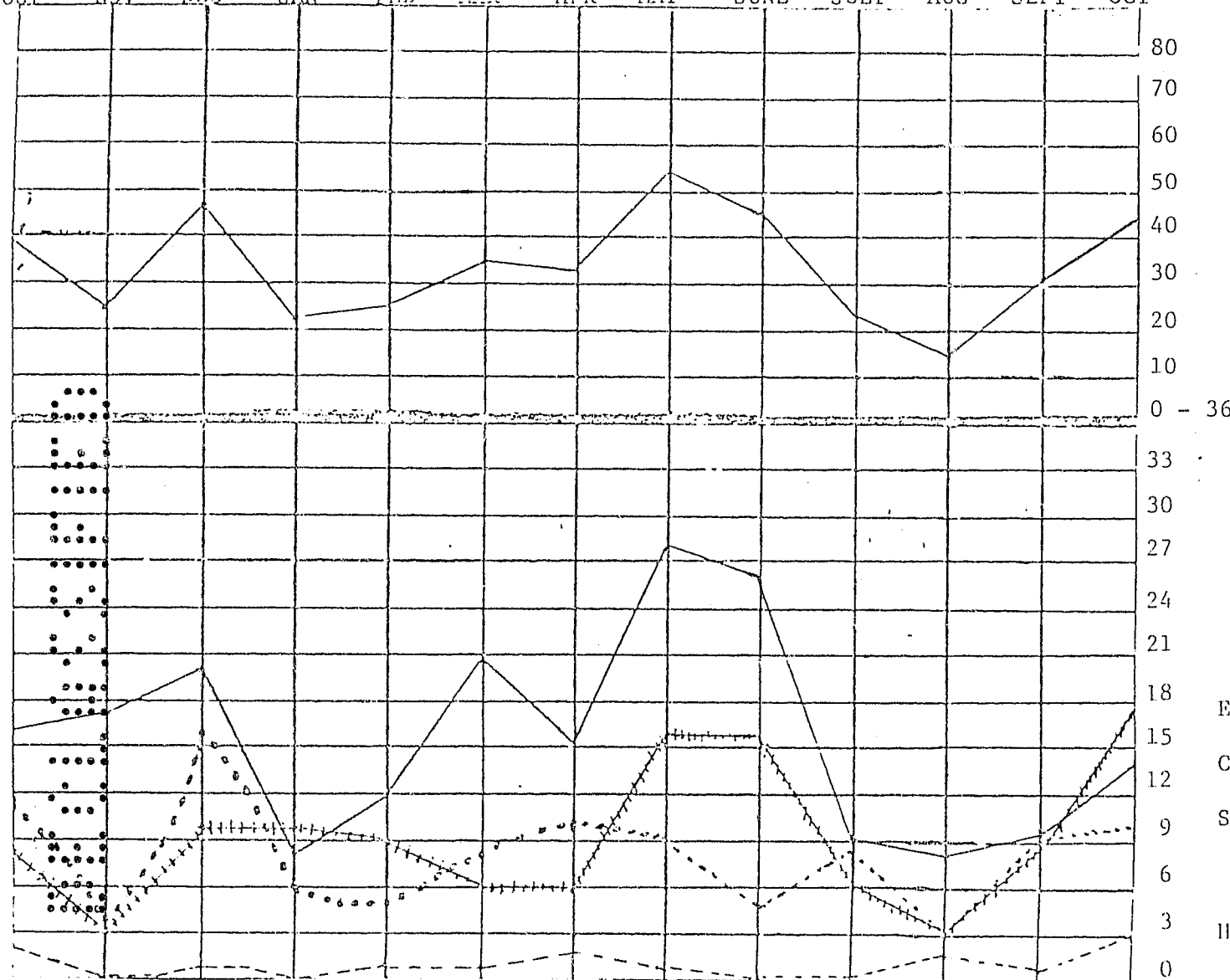
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MONTHLY FREQUENCY OF TERRORIST RELATED INCIDENTS BY REGION (1) - OCTOBER 1968 - October 1969

OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUNE JULY AUG SEPT OCT



Total 44

East 17 (2)

Capital 14 (2)

South Coast 10 (3)

Highlands 3 (5)

- (1) For purposes of this graph both acts of violence includes shootings, bombings, etc., assassinated bodies
 (2) Capital area: Sacatepeques, Guatemala
 (3) South Coast: San Marcos, Quezaltenango, Retalhuleu, Suchitepequez, Escuintla, Santa Rosa
 (4) Eastern Region: Jutiapa, Jalapa, El Progreso, Zacapa, Chiquimula, Izabal
 (5) Highlands: Totonicapan, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango, El Quiche, Baja-Verapaz, Solola

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